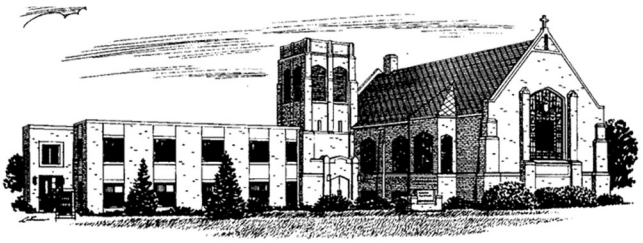
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Bradley717@gmail.com

Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Fall, Winter and Spring (beginning Sept 11):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

Summer of 2023 (beginning June 4):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*

PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR SEPTEMBER 2022

"Embody the Word." What does that phrase mean to you? That was the theme of the recent ELCA Churchwide Assembly held in Columbus, OH. This assembly is the primary decision-making body of the ELCA. Its voting members join to worship, hear churchwide reports, establish ELCA policy, adopt a budget and so much more. This year, Connor Ashley was one of our Synod's voting members at the Assembly. What an honor for him and us! You can find lots of information about the Assembly at https://elca.org/churchwideassembly. As noted on the website, "There's an importance in the double meaning of the two words:

- Embody, meaning both the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the life of the church emerging from a pandemic.
- Word – both meaning Jesus Christ and scripture"

So, what does the phrase mean to you, as an individual, or for us as a congregation, the body of Christ, as formed through Word and sacrament into that very body? How do we live out the mission of being Christ's body in the world? How do we live out our mission of "*joyfully sharing God's love for all?*" Here are a few things made evident in this newsletter – Vacation Bible School, *God's Work. Our Hands.* Sunday, a new program year with Sunday School, choir, bells, Bible studies, and a welcome to all, embodying God's unconditional love for all people, to name a few. We are called to "embody the Word" wherever we find ourselves. Thanks be to God for giving us the will and strength to do so.

-Pastor Joan

General Information

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Watch weekly emails and door signage for any change in protocol. As of printing, masks are encouraged for those who feel so inclined but not required. Nursery workers and communion assistants will wear masks.

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

After our last 10am Summer Service, we will head outside and enjoy hot dogs & brats with some tasty side dishes, all provided by Saron. We are asking attendees to bring desserts to share. We'll have some tables and chairs set up but you might be more comfortable with a bag chair or blanket. The greenspace will be fenced off so kids can safely play. We'll have some yard games for all to enjoy!

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Bernice Koski is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman;
Kathleen & Phillip Preston are at Caretel in St. Joseph;
Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

9/3	Chelsea Knauf
9/4	Nicole Coar
9/10	Julie Kimmerly
9/10	David Siewert
9/12	Charles Fortenbacher
9/12	Beth Gray-Roll
9/13	Sally Schmuhl
9/13	Makaio Talbert
9/15	Deanna Deaton
9/15	Dan Fortenbacher
9/16	William Oleson
9/17	John Olson
9/18	Brandon Burrow
9/18	Troy Burrow
9/18	Grant Gacek
9/18	Wendy Hoffman
9/19	Rian Huff
9/20	Todd Gorman
9/23	Kathy Cowall
9/23	David Stankiewicz
9/24	Marybeth Culverhouse
9/24	Sue Fortenbacher
9/25	Colleen Lundgren
9/25	Kirsten Talbert
9/27	Jack Houser

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

9/3	Scott & Kate Kohs
9/7	Karen & Peter Johnson
9/10	Pam & John Olson
9/11	Ken & Suzy Kohs

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

Once again, another year has come and gone. While it feels like the worst of the pandemic is behind us, there is still the hint of uncertainty that everything could revert back to 2020. Coupled with the divisiveness rampant in our country today and the open conflict around the world, it makes for unsettling times.

Amid the uncertainty, however, one constant stands out – **God is still there for us!**

This year as we pause for our annual focus on stewardship, we will emphasize the need for each of us to be "Connecting with God," or perhaps more accurately, strengthening our connection with God to help us fulfill our duty as stewards of all that God has given us.

Over the next few weeks, through worship services, self-study, and reflection you will have opportunities to strengthen your personal connection with God. Key happenings include:

Connecting with God through Worship and Music [Sunday, October 2]

Connecting with God through Learning [Sunday, October 9]

Connecting with God through Prayer [Sunday, October 16]

An Open Mic with God [Prayer Vigil, Friday, October 21, noon to 4:30 pm]

Connecting with God through Service [Sunday, October 23]

Connecting with God through Church Life at Saron [Sunday, October 30]

Connecting with God through the Community of Saints [Sunday, November 6]

Look for more details in the weekly emails, monthly newsletters, and the U.S. mail.

We hope that each of you will embrace and commit to this journey. The future of Saron and ultimately the entire community of faith will be affected by your actions.

We love because God first loved us.

1 John 4:19 (ISV)

Rather than doing a single Bible Study during the Fall 2022 Stewardship Focus, the Stewardship Committee wants you all to provide inspirations and devotions each week with the emphasis on "Connecting with God." Specifically, we are looking for individuals to write short devotionals similar to those found in the Augsburg Press "The Word In Season." Alternatively, one can submit a photograph or drawing (or both a devotion and a picture) that reflects on or meditates on a selected Bible passage of the week. If you are interested in writing devotions or submitting pictures, please contact Carol Hafer at 269-470-2255, or e-mail her at dctchafer@comcast.net as soon as possible. Devotions should be submitted by September 18. Thanks in advance for your participation!

FORTIFY & fly

As things *ramp* up for Fall, it's an appropriate time to mention we're investigating if it's feasible to put a *ramp* in the sanctuary to make the chancel area more accessible, which includes working with the city on permit requirements. That's just one of several projects being researched. We're also working on options for the courtyard and landscaping, as well as fine tuning the new website before it's made live (should happen early in September).

At the end of July 2022, we had collected an additional $170 for a total of $376,703 towards our pledge total of $367,205. If you still have a pledge to fulfill or simply wish to continue giving, we'll find a home for it. As always, thank you for being with us on this journey!

Worship

CHOIR

Hi Saron! I would like to invite you all to check out and consider being a part of one or both of our ensembles. We rehearse on Thursday evenings, with a handful of exceptions throughout the year.

Bell choir rehearses from 6-7pm and plays in worship about once a month, including both services on Easter morning. Ringers DO NOT need to know how to read music. I have a system to help inexperienced musicians learn to play and can start new ringers on a position with less notes with growth from there. Currently we are down a couple positions so please come check us out!

Senior choir rehearses from 7-8pm and sings in every 11am worship service except during Summer and a handful of other times throughout the year. We learn fast but many of our anthems are familiar tunes or songs we have done before. I try to only introduce 1-2 new pieces of music a season so we can spend time learning them. Again, like with bell choir, no experience is necessary to sing with us.

Rehearsals are very relaxed and we have so much fun in both ensembles. Stop by on a Thursday evening and have some fun with us!

If you have any questions, please let me know.
Marcus Roll: 269/930-6315 or roll1mc@gmail.com

Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan.

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

NURSERY HELP NEEDED

WHAT?

To maintain a fun environment while also meeting safety and liability requirements, we need more volunteers to assist our childcare provider during the 8:30am or 11am services.

WHY?

Our church is welcoming to disruptions but not all parents are comfortable with small children in the sanctuary. We want to provide a meaningly worship experience and if we don't offer a nursery, some families may stop coming or move on.

WHEN?

We'll take whatever time you can give, whether it's once, once a month or once every third month. The schedule is prepared a month at a time based on volunteer availability and a reminder comes before your assigned slot.

WHO?

Thank you for considering helping us keep this service going and growing our volunteer pool! Contact Marilyn Lucy at marilynlucy@sbcglobal.net or 269-759-3464.

PRAYER GROUP

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am as long as there is interest. The link remains the same each week and is sent out on Tuesdays.

ALTAR FLOWERS

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Please follow up with a check to Saron with "Flowers" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to beautify our worship space! Feel free to take them home after the service to enjoy. **Please return the vase to Saron to be reused.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

September 4: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 1
Philemon 1-21
Luke 14:25-33

September 11: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 32:7-14
Psalm 51:1-10
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-10

September 18: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Amos 8:4-7
Psalm 113
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Luke 16:1-13

September 25: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Psalm 146
1 Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

YOUTH GROUP

Our youth group (grades 6-12) meets once a month after 2nd service (12:30pm-2pm). Typically, we have lunch and play some games, either board games or video games. Watch for emails with dates for the coming months. We look forward to seeing you!
Friends are always welcome to join us.

Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

We offer a time of age-appropriate study between the two services (9:40am-10:30am), beginning Sept 11:

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We had a fantastic week (Aug 1–4) of Bible lessons, music, crafts and outdoor activities with 16 kids attending on the final day (our carnival themed family day). We can't thank our Education Committee enough for planning and executing the fun, along with ALL the additional volunteers it took to pull it off: Fran, Kristen, Amanda, Pastor Joan, Mary, Laura, Scott, Lindsay, Matt, Mia, Alaina, Dennis, Colleen, Dave, Kathie, Marilyn, Juliet, Sally, and Deanna. We're already looking forward to next year!

NEW WEDNESDAY EVENING FORUM & FELLOWSHIP

This group and format is intended to be an opportunity for members and guests to gather with the goal of reaching a deeper understanding of topics with which we are confronted on a regular basis. There will be a general overview of a topic followed by interaction among the participants. This could include, for those who are willing, the sharing of information which was brought in preparation for the discussion or a kind of Socratic discussion. Because of our tradition, we will be looking into these topics through a distinctively Biblical, Christian, Lutheran lens. We will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, pausing for Advent and Lent. The first session will be Wednesday, September 7 in the lounge. Ed Staude is the facilitator. Adults, teens, married, single, members, guests… All are welcome. Come check us out!

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Fall is a great time to join us on for a time of study and fellowship on **Tuesday evenings at 6pm in the upstairs lounge**. Around 7pm, we adjourn to a local restaurant for more discussion but with food and drink. All are welcome!

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

You are invited to a new 6-week study, entitled *Acts: Catching up with the Spirit* by Matt Skinner, which begins on **Thursday, September 15**. In this study, led by Pastor Joan, "*Skinner explores six key themes that illustrate the ways in which reading Acts is capable of igniting our imagination about the character of the Christian message, the work of God's people (the church), and the challenges of living faithfully in a complex and changing world*.*

We will meet Thursday mornings in the upstairs lounge from 9:30am-11am. Cost of the book is $13.50. Contact Pastor Joan if you would like to reserve a book or if you have any questions. This class is open to all interested in attending. You are welcome to join any time, for one session or for many.

*from the website

Mark October 2nd at 6:30pm on your calendar, for the first session of this season's book discussions. We will meet in the upstairs lounge and more details will be in the October newsletter. Stay tuned! The book up for discussion is "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles. Spanning just ten days in 1954 and told from multiple points of view, the story of 18-year-old Emmett Watson unfolds. A car trip to California with his 8-year-old-brother to find their long-lost mother turns in the opposite direction toward New York City and the reader is in for a wild ride. Hard to stop reading once begun. So, get yourself a copy, start reading now (long novel) and join us! We welcome all for a season of good reading, good discussions and good company. Questions? Contact Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.

"IT'S CALLED READING! It's how people install new software into their brains."
- Once Upon a Time Book Club

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will meet at 7pm on Wednesday, September 14, on-location in the church lounge. Zoom will be available. The link will be emailed closer to the meeting date. Study leader will be Kathy Cowall.

Contact Melanie McCammon at 269/449-8399 for more information about this group.

SARON CHURCH WOMEN

We will be collecting items for "Personal Care Kits" and "Fabric Kits" as well as monetary donations to cover shipping costs. See detailed article under **Outreach** section of the newsletter. Thank you!

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex or courtyard after the service? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

Lutheran World Relief

Saron Church Women will, again, be collecting items for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). This project resumes after a hiatus the last two years. Donation opportunities from the congregation will include "Personal Care Kits", "Fabric Kits", and also cash donations for shipping costs. LWR distributes items all over the world, wherever they are needed.

We will distribute plastic resealable kit bags beginning **Sunday, September 11**. Kits will be due on **Sunday, October 2.** You may bring completed kits anytime during that timeframe and deposit them in labeled boxes in the narthex. Please do not add other items or omit any of the items listed. All items should be new and in good condition.

A personal care kit has one light-weight bath towel (dark color recommended), two bath-size bars of soap, one adult-size toothbrush, one sturdy comb, and one metal nail clipper**.**

A fabric kit has 2-4 yards of cloth and matching thread.

Shipping cost donations will also be welcome. Donations can be cash or a check made payable to Saron Church Women with "LWR shipping costs" as the memo. These donations may be given to Colleen Lundgren, Denise Cook, or Melanie McCammon.

Thank you very much in advance for your generosity in supporting this ministry!

NOISY OFFERING

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.
Thank you for your generous offerings!

God's work. Our hands.

After a hiatus due to Covid restrictions, we are happy to announce this annual event will take place on Sunday, September 11. Please come to church in your *God's Work. Our Hands*. shirt or work clothes. For those volunteering, Saron will provide pizza immediately following the 11am service. Our goal is to arrive at the work sites by 1pm. We can carpool or caravan if anyone is unsure of the locations. This year we are providing two options:

- The Readiness Center (pre-school and after-school support for children and parents) could use help in cutting papers to be used throughout the year for learning projects.
- The Boys & Girls Club has a more physically challenging project involving the reorganization of 3 small outbuildings on the grounds.

An electronic sign-up is in the weekly email. There is also a paper version in the narthex or you can contact the church office. This will help us plan for lunch and to know how many volunteers are available at each location.

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

For I was hungry and you gave me food.
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
- Matthew 25:35

On July 28th, Saron members Mary Alice Brunner, Jan Taylor, Pastor Joan, and Marilyn Frey were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing lunches for 67 guests. It was again wonderful to be able to greet & serve the guests in the dining room!

Thank you those able to help with Saron's July Collection of needed items! Your donations, and those in the future, will help with Saron's ministry at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

Our new banner at the front of the church!

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Check out the Interfaith news bulletins at swmichinterfaith.org/bulletins

Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

THANK YOU!

Marilyn & Dale Lucy are working to remove some of the "waves" in the courtyard, often caused by tree roots under the pavers. We appreciate you making the area safer and more aesthetically pleasing!

SEPTEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:30am Bible Study	**2**	**3**
4 10am Worship at Saron with Zoom Option 11am Church Picnic in the Courtyard	**5** **MEMORIAL DAY**	**6** 6pm Bible Study	**7** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Forum & Fellowship Group	**8** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**9**	**10**
11 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option ***God's Work. Our Hands.* Sunday**	**12** 11am Prayer Group	**13** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**14** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Deborah Circle	**15** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**16**	**17**
18 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**19** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**20** 6pm Bible Study	**21** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Forum & Fellowship Group	**22** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen Day**	**23**	**24**
25 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**26** 11am Prayer Group	**27** 6pm Bible Study	**28** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**29** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**30** Ferguson/Cipich Wedding Rehearsal	

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Can we do it again? YES, WE CAN!!! The Outreach Committee initially agreed to host two months of collecting diapers to benefit struggling parents, primarily in the Benton Harbor area. Our first month, June, was record-breaking - the single highest number of diapers donated by a congregation since United Through Motherhood started these drives, and that was *before* they picked up the additional ones dropped off on the last day!

Let's again shatter expectations and help United Through Motherhood in their mission of removing the stress of not having an adequate diaper supply, which can lead to a loss of childcare services and thus the inability to work.

Collection boxes will be in the narthex and at the office entrance during the month of September. The diapers, baby wipes and creams will be picked up by United Through Motherhood and distributed at the Center for Better Health in Benton Harbor. Thank you for your generous support of this outreach effort!

Questions? Call Karen Johnson at 269-313-9510.